

APPROVED 10/24/2007

Present: Charles Kimball, Chair, Donald Gates, Jr., Pat Martell, Doug McElroy, Mike Nygren, Peg Pinkham, Andy Kohlhofer, Peter Bearse, Town Administrator Heidi Carlson, Thom Roy, Dick Heselton, member of the public Keith Stanton (who video taped the meeting), member of the public Neil Rowland (who audio taped the meeting), and recording secretary Kathy Arsenault.

The meeting was called to order @ 7: 02 pm, by Charles Kimball chair.

Minutes for Sept. 19, 2007 were reviewed and motion was made to accept the minutes by Peter Bearse and seconded by Doug McElroy.

Town Administrator Heidi Carlson passed out Budget Proposals for the Fremont Fire Rescue Dept.

Peg Pinkham suggested that at the beginning of each meeting that introductions should be made around the table. All present concurred and introductions followed.

Fire Chief Dick Heselton introduced Deputy Chief Thom Roy who presented the budget for the Fire Rescue Department. Thom indicated that the summary sheet distributed along with the budget proposal references all paperwork. To summarize, he indicated that this year's budget looks a bit different than last year's due to the merger of the Fire Department and the EMS. They are presenting one consolidated budget for all categories. Some items that were individual line items between departments are now merged within the same category. Some categories were kept under individual titles (Fire Department or EMS) due to the nature of the line item. Thom stated that although there may appear to be an increase in some lines, there actually isn't. It appears this way because of the moving around and merging of the categories. Thom stated that there is actually an overall decrease in the combining of the two budgets. .

Chief Heselton stated that it is a difficult budget to propose due to the unforeseen happenings that you can't prepare for. This budget isn't just about employee payroll; there are emergency situations, trucks breaking down, etc.

Peter Bearse questioned the decrease in the mileage line item. Thom explained the reason for this adding that a utility vehicle as well as carpooling for training etc. helped to decrease this number.

It was decided to start with the Budget Proposal of \$184, 275. This proposal shows a decrease in the budget of \$1,090. Thom reviewed the budget by line items with a brief explanation of each. He noted that a new computer has been added to the New Equipment line to update the 10+-year-old system and software that is currently being used. Chief Heselton stated that it is aged and outdated, nor does it go on-line. Some discussion regarding the need for this took place. Peter Bearse asked questions regarding the database and the uses the Fire Rescue Department needs it for. Peter asked if the budgetary numbers reflect the proposal for the comp/software purchases. Thom said that yes it includes all software needed as well as the new equipment.

Thom continued down thru the line items and noted that there was a 3% cost of living increase in the salary line for the Chief/Administration.

Andy Kohlhofer asked about an anti-virus system and whether or not the Fire Department has and/or uses one. Thom Roy stated that yes the department has one but it is not an individual purchase that it is an anti-virus system that is purchased for the town.

Peter Bearse asked about provisions for the automatic backup for the software programs and does the department have/use one. Thom replied that yes, although not automated, there is a backup system in place for the software.

Pat Martell asked how many people are on the Fire Department/EMS squads. Thom noted that there are currently (36) fire department personnel and (16) EMS personnel on the roster. That began discussion regarding the title of the department and that it is now officially called the Fremont Fire and EMS Department. Most members of the departments are cross- trained at this point, and others are still working towards it.

Thom continued thru the line items giving a brief summary of each.

Radio tower discussion began with Chief Heselton giving a summary of the improvements in communication for all emergency departments within the purchase of the tower. He stated that the fire frequency will be changing in the near future and that having the tower with our own channel will be of great benefit.

Thom stated that the clerical line is up 3% due to the cost of living increase. He also noted that there is an increase in the telephone lines due to the increase of \$12,000.00 for the radio tower.

Peter Bearse asked if the mandates were federal or state. Thom stated that it is a written protocol, and not a mandate. Chief Heselton concurred with Thom.

Doug McElroy asked about the auto pulse, how is it working and has the department had to use it yet. This prompted discussion regarding the auto pulse. Although it hasn't been used yet, it is a benefit to have the auto pulse available and on hand. Chief Heselton noted that there has been one documented save with the auto pulse recorded in the state of Vermont.

Rick Butler came into the meeting @7:37 pm

Peter Bearse asked if there was any medical equipment needed, that the Department didn't think to ask for in the budget, items perhaps that could save lives. Thom said that he would like to think "No", that a great deal of time was put into the budget. And he doesn't foresee that they have forgotten any needed equipment.

Mike Nygren asked for detail regarding volunteer retirement. Thom discussed and explained the eligibility of this program, which is offered to the department. It is a program that is individual based depending on how the individual would like to invest the benefits, etc. discussion continued about the retirement program.

Christopher Braid came into the meeting @7:44pm.

Discussion went back to the combining of the two departments. It was asked how are things running now since the merger. Thom stated that things are going well Chief Heselton stated that they are continuing to work hard on ironing everything out, but that all is going well.

Christopher Braid (Captain/Fremont Fire Rescue Dept & Emergency Management Director) added that it is going well, that there are some bumps in the road. He added that some people like it and some people don't, but that they are going in the right direction and working hard at it.

Andy Kohlhofer asked if there was any savings by merging the two departments. Thom stated that overall yes, there are some areas, like training, that it isn't, but overall it is. (Fire Department training is different than the EMS training, etc). Chief Heselton stated that it was quite an experience to go through, but all concurred that they are working together to keep things going in the right direction.

Andy Kohlhofer commented that it was a well thought out budget. .

Peter Bearse asked how the budget reflects serious emergency situations and are they prepared for one.

Thom and Chief Heselton both agreed that they would deal with it the best that they can. They can't foresee all happenings in the proposed budget, but they will deal with things as it comes along. Donald Gates Jr., mentioned the mutual aid that is available to the Departments. Chief Heselton discussed the mutual aid benefits, and how important it is to be a member of the state wide mutual aid organization.

Thom stated that their motto is "Prepared to Serve" and they (Fire and EMS) are working towards all being trained and prepared to live up to that motto.

Donald Gates, Jr. stated that the department should be recognized for the great work in preparing this budget proposal and for coming in under budget. It was a well thought out and well presented budget and the Budget Committee recognizes that.

Thom Roy began discussion for \$12,000.00 for a Mobile Lighting Systems (warrant article). Thom Roy explained what this was as Heidi Carlson showed pictures of it. Dick Heselton explained why it is important to have mobile lighting systems. Having the ability to illuminate a great deal of property/space can only benefit the town, especially with all emergency services contributing to the purchase of it. The mobile lighting system would consist of a purchase of (4) 1000-watt lights. Discussion continued for the pros and cons of having the mobile lighting system. Charles Kimball stated that it is important to have the necessary lighting for emergency services.

Chief Heselton mentioned that the Department is having trouble with the fuel they are using. It is causing trouble with the engines and carburetors as well. The ethanol is believed to be the cause of the problem.

Discussion began around the table regarding flu clinics, the times, dates and locations of them within the Fremont area. Heidi Carlson has the list from the American Lung Assoc. she will pass it on to anyone interested in it. Heidi also stated that the info is posted on the Town's website.

Peter Bearse asked for more detail regarding the \$12,000 warrant article for the Mobile Lighting System. Chief Heselton made it clear that this is the actual cost of the system. Thom has already done his homework, and there is no decreasing the number. Peter Bearse asked if the purchase of this system could come from the capital reserve funds. Thom Roy stated that the capital reserve fund is used for the purchase of equipment/apparatus to build up the department over time with the purchase of Jaws of Life, etc. The department would not use the capital reserve fund for a purchase as small as this.

Chief Heselton discussed the current condition/age of the apparatus the department has now. It is likely that come 2012, a new engine purchase will be necessary and that the cost of these items are astronomical.

The board thanked the Fire Department for the budget proposal and Thom Roy, Dick Heselton, Christopher Braid, and Rick Butler left the meeting at 8:14pm.

Town Administrator Heidi Carlson passed out the Town of Fremont Budget Reports. Members of the board took time to review the documents passed out. Discussion began regarding the clarification of duties between volunteers/employees of the Fire Department and EMS. Heidi Carlson explained the "point system" which is used. She also explained that the majority of the fire and rescue payroll is paid out by way of the "point system".

Heidi Carlson continued with summary discussion for the budget reports.

Andy Kohlhofer asked about weather emergency and why the town doesn't budget for that. Heidi Carlson explained that no, weather emergency is something that is not budgeted for. He also asked about Waste disposal and a minor discussion regarding waste disposal and Bulky day began. Heidi Carlson believes that all the money for waste disposal will be spent.

Regarding Animal Control, Heidi Carlson noted that the town went months without anyone in that position. We now have Renee King, who is currently the Animal Control Officer.

Regarding Mosquito Control, Heidi mentioned that we were budgeted to do one (1) spray where people congregate. The town did do that budgeted spray. The Town of Fremont did have a positive EEE test September 19, the State of NH notified us and a new spray was done October 4. This second spray came at no cost to the Town.

Pat Martell noticed a typo error and Heidi Carlson confirmed it was an error and it will be corrected. Pat Martell also asked about the expendable trust fund. Heidi Carlson explained and discussed the differences between the Expendable Trust and the Capital Reserve Fund and the purpose of each.

Heidi Carlson then distributed the "Basic Law of Town Village and School District Budgeting 2007 Edition" for all Budget Committee members to review and keep with their files. In addition to this, Heidi also distributed the new tax rate press release. She explained that the flyer would be enclosed with all tax bills and explanations within. The tax rate has been set and it is an increase if \$0.96 from last years tax rate.

Heidi passed out budgets for the following; election/registration, health, direct assistance, judicial and legal services, patriotic purposes, conservation, and debt service. Pat Martell asked about the Parks and Recreation, Heidi said that she could include that as well given about 10 minutes. Heidi left the meeting to copy the Parks and Rec. budget for all members. It was decided to not continue discussions for any further budgets this evening. Instead, members would take home for review the budgets provided by Heidi and discuss them at the next meeting.

Andy Kohlhofer wanted to revisit the \$12,000.00 for the mobile lighting system for the Fire Department. Charles Kimball made it clear that it is just for consideration at this time, we are not voting on anything until all budgets are complete. He added that even at that, we would just be voting to recommend or not recommend it.

Peg Pinkham mentioned that there is a conflict regarding the Dec. 1 date for the School Board to present their budget. We need to consider rescheduling to discuss the school budget. Peg noted that it worked well planning a Saturday and getting the meeting done in one day instead of breaking it up over the course of several weeknights. The consensus was that all like the idea of the Saturday meeting. Peg offered that any recommendations would be considered. Mike Nygren asked for the school to be broken down line by line in greater detail. Donald Gates, Jr. agreed and Peg Pinkham said that the school could do that. Peg will make the request to the school board that they have the budget prior to the meeting. This would be most helpful to members to review and study before the actual meeting. Doug McElroy asked to keep the changes to a minimal as that would be helpful as well.

Andy Kohlhofer sparked discussion regarding old business of the tuition agreement. He is questioning if the school board has proof (by means of a court order) that the vote was legal. He stated that in a case like that you need to have 50% of all registered voters present or a court order. Andy Kohlhofer is requesting proof from the school board that they had a court order for that meeting. Andy Kohlhofer questioned the legality of that meeting 2 years ago. Peg Pinkham stated that we (School Board) have legal documentation proving that it was a legal meeting. Andy Kohlhofer stated that he would like to see that proof just for validation. Peg Pinkham noted that it was not challenged at the time and that the board took the necessary steps to hold a special meeting.

Peter Bearse asked why the Town of Danville is getting more funding for certain lines than we are within the school budget. Peg Pinkham stated that she would look into it. This prompted some discussion as to what the criteria might be for funding/grants within the state. There are many contributing factors such as special ed., hot lunch programs, etc., that help to determine what amounts of money go where.

Peg Pinkham wanted to clarify that a request should be going through the board chair not an individual. She stated that all information regarding the process should be available to private citizens, budget committee members, the voters, etc. In addition, she suggested that all e-mails should be part of the minutes (with 3 or more members). We want to set the precedence for people to understand that we will provide any and all information that we can, but that it takes a lot of time and money to pursue questions being repeatedly asked. The voters have the right to

know how much time and money is spent on repeatedly asked requests, which are costly, both in time and money.

Andy Kohlhofer made a motion requesting that the Budget Committee request documentation for the special town meeting at which the vote for the tuition agreement with the Sanborn Regional School district was made, proving that it was legal and received legal approval. Peter Bearse seconded the motion and a vote was taken.

Voting in the negative, Peg Pinkham, Mike Nygren, Donald Gates, Jr., Doug McElroy

Voting if the affirmative, Peter Bearse, Pat Martell, Andy Kohlhofer

Charles Kimball abstaining.

Mike Nygren encouraged all not to let this get personal and to remember to step forward not backwards, the issue has been beaten to death. Charles Kimball agreed and stated that we can't go backwards, it has been brought up at school board meeting, and legal council said back in March that this was legal.

Andy Kohlhofer stated that he is concerned about the spending of school dollars and is looking for answers and to have some leverage for Sanborn.

Peg Pinkham reminded all that we have 17 years with Sanborn, a lot of years to come, and a lot of changes to come too.

Peter Bearse stated that he doesn't believe that it is about leverage over Sanborn and that it is not personal.

Peg Pinkham motioned to set the date for the School Board to meet with the Budget Committee on Saturday December 8 @ 9:00am. Donald Gates, Jr. seconded and the motion was approved.

Peter Bearse as well as Andy Kohlhofer is questioning still what the criteria are for funding (for Danville) and was it federal money or grant money. Andy Kohlhofer asked if we could get the DRA into a meeting to help explain the necessary criteria for this support. Peg Pinkham asked for what year are they specifically looking for background on. Mike Nygren explained his reasons for bringing up the questions to begin with (from a previous meeting). He stated that the School Board comparatively spends their money differently than any other board. There is a certain formula that you have to follow to determine funds being granted to towns. Andy Kohlhofer asked if we could have someone from the DRA put together an explanation for us. Peg Pinkham noted that she would look into this. Heidi Carlson mentioned that perhaps it might come from the DOE. Peg Pinkham noted that all of us including members of the school board are all taxpayers too. We are all concerned with where the money is going.

The next scheduled board meeting is Wednesday October 24, 2007 @ 7:00pm.

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:23pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Arsenault
Recording Secretary